

## Cambridgeshire Village Colleges Scrapbook 1897 to 1990



*Bassingbourn Village College opening, 1954 110.63*

Facts, Features and (occasional) Fallacies  
reported in Cambridge Newspapers

summarised by

Mike Petty

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Most of these stories originally appeared in the Cambridge Daily/Evening/News or the  
Cambridgeshire Weekly News, its sister title.

They are supplemented by some articles published in the  
Cambridge Independent Press or Cambridge Chronicle

Most were featured in my 'Looking Back' column in the Cambridge News from 1996-2014

The complete 'Cambridgeshire Scrapbook' of which this is a small section is published online  
at [bit.ly/CambsCollection](http://bit.ly/CambsCollection)

<https://archive.org/search.php?query=creator%3A%22Mike%20Petty%22>

I have digital and other copies of most of the stories summarised.

Many may be read on Flickr in Albums headed '*Cambs News*'

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/153171359@N04/albums>

The original volumes are housed in the Cambridgeshire Collection at Cambridge Central  
Library where there are many other indexes dating back to 1770.

They also have detailed newspaper cuttings files on over 750 topics that have been compiled  
since the 1960s.

Newspapers sometimes get things wrong. I copy things out incorrectly. Do check

There are a multitude of spelling and layout errors. Please forgive or correct them

News never stops but this file was finished on 31 August 2016.

I will maintain supplements and corrections – contact me for anything you need

Please make what use of these notes that you may. Kindly remember where they came from

See my website – [www.mikepetty.org.uk](http://www.mikepetty.org.uk) for further notes.

Mike Petty, Stretham

2018

## 1920

1923 09 23

Mr Henry Morris, director of education for Cambridgeshire, told a meeting that at present many of the county schools had an average attendance of under 30, and some had 10 children. It was no use sending out a body of enthusiastic lecturers in Ford motor vans into the villages unless they had in those villages a sound elementary education. A village institution was needed to cover every phase of life and the village school master would be practically the village leader

1925 02 11

What was aptly described as “a wonderful ideal” is expressed in a memorandum drawn up by Mr H. Morris, the County Education Secretary, entitled “The Village College”. The aim would be to establish in about 10 centres a system of village colleges which would provide for the co-ordination and development of all forms of education – primary, secondary, further and adult, including agricultural – together with social and recreational facilities. They would provide a nursery schoolroom which would serve for use as an infant welfare centre.

1925 10 14

The principal item dealt with by the County Education Committee was the decision to recommend the scheme for a village college at Sawston. Six villages are catered for in various ways and the provision of a new building would cost no more than the patching up of the existing of the old one. The senior school would provide for 200 boys and girls with rooms for instruction in practical subjects (woodwork, metalwork, cookery, laundry and housewifery, including mothercraft)

1927 11 05

The County Education Committee approved the erection of a village college at Sawston. The basis of the institution is a Senior School which will be an elementary and not a secondary school. This will provide an advanced education for older children and pay special attention to practical instruction, particularly woodwork, domestic subjects and gardening. They were anxious to give a really good education on a rural basis. It was an experiment that was practically unique. The name ‘village college’ has been chosen for a building which provided for both elementary and adult (including agricultural) education and at the same time would be available for social activities.

## 1930

1930 06 18

Impington Hall has been presented to the County Council by Messrs Chivers & Sons to be used as a village college. It is in a good state of preservation and repair with central heating and electricity installed and is quite the finest site one could secure. It will provide a warden’s house, caretaker’s cottage, library and reading room together with two adult education rooms and staff room. A new block will be erected adjacent to it 30 06 18

1930 12 30

The Prince of Wales set the seal of Royal approval upon an ambitious scheme of rural education which has attracted world-wide attention when he opened Sawston Village College. Should it prove a success it will prove a pattern for a chain of similar colleges not only for the rest of this county but for vast Dominions beyond the seas. The Prince received a most enthusiastic reception. The village was gay with bunting and the inhabitants turned out en masse to wave and cheer. 30 12 30a-c

1931 05 08

A controversy has arisen as to the use of the hall at Sawston Village College as a cinema. The Education Committee says it cannot be used on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays as it would turn it from an educational centre into an ordinary cinema. But they had promised that the Spicers pictures would be transferred to the new hall. A rival cinema scheme had been brought forward and its promoters were voted en bloc as school managers 31 05 08m & n

1931 10 02

A public meeting at Cottenham agreed to protest against the large expenditure of public funds on the proposed village college at Impington. Officials were suffering from spendmania, it was time the whole thing was hit on the head and done with. It was wrong to transport a large number of children daily from the large village of Cottenham to the smaller village of Impington. If there was such a scheme, Cottenham was the place for it. 31 10 02j

1932 02 16

At the opening of the new Spicers Theatre at Sawston Mr H.G. Spicer recalled that they had provided silent pictures for ten years, now they would be 'talking' or 'musical'. He hoped to also have variety entertainment, theatricals and dances. He then attacked the County Education Officer, Herbert Morris, over the previous agreement for showing pictures at Sawston Village College 32 09 16b

1935 04 05

The Chivers family have suggested the name 'Impington Village College' for the new school to be built on land they have donated. Magdalene College may be interested in certain of the original portions of Impington Hall and the library fittings and some of the panelling might be incorporated in the new College. Ultimately the land round the 13-acre site may be opened up as a building estate and this should be considered when the new college is planned. 35 04 05b

1936 04 09

A distinguished group of architects including the Slade Professor Fine Art and the Vice-Presidents of the Royal Institute of British Architects have offered to contribute £1,200 towards the architectural fees of building Histon Village College provided it is designed by the firm of Maxwell Fry and Victor Gropius. The County Council said the offer came entirely out of the blue and was a great compliment to Cambridgeshire. It would be a model of its kind and used not only as a school but a centre of adult education. 36 04 09 & a

1937 05 07

Bottisham Village College was opened by the President of the Board of Education. During the day the college houses 240 scholars in the senior school with a provided for the county library which will be used by students at evening classes. The warden's house and a house for women members of staff occupy a site opposite the main building. Adjacent is the junior school with a nursery for the under-fives and the Sir Hailey Stewart Clinic for the medical inspection of pupils. 37 05 07 & a

1937 10 13

County Council proposals for the establishment of village colleges at Swavesey and Impington have been approved by the Government. But they reject plans for a new junior school at Cottenham: it would be better to use the money from Insurance to rebuild portions of the burnt down one. Negotiation would be opened with Cottenham Eleemosynary Charities for the purchase of land in Lamb's Lane. The County would also discuss with the Air Ministry about school-age children due to arrive in Bassingbourn in connection with the establishment of an aerodrome 37 10 13c

1937 10 15

Linton Village College could help the agricultural industry and help stem the drift from the countryside to the towns. It is intended to serve as a community centre for education, recreation and social life, the Earl of Feversham said at the opening. The teaching of mathematics would have a realistic connection with what went on in the workshop and school garden. It has a workshop equipped with lathes and means of learning about the internal combustion engine (with an eye on the farm tractor) and electricity while girls do cookery, housewifery and laundrywork in the domestic science room. 37 10 15a

1937 12 22

Village college dinners at 2½ d provide sufficient nourishment? — 37 12 22&a

1938 05 06

Bottisham Village College celebrates 1st birthday – 38 05 06c

1938 08 22

Mr H.G. Wells criticised Cambridgeshire Village Colleges: "They are very beautiful specimens of architecture. I admired the decoration of the rooms, the beautiful chairs and tables. And then I went into the library and was shocked beyond measure at the unattractiveness and want of imagination. There were no dictionaries or encyclopaedias. There were no books of reference. There was not even a Whitaker. These things are of great educational importance" If some of the money spent on flowers and tables was expended on reference books it would be better for the village college as an educational institution", he told a conference. 38 08 22a. also 38 08 23 response from wardens – 38 08 24a

## **1940**

1940 03 14

Village College. At the invitation of Mr. Stanley Chivers, a number of old age pensioners foregathered in the common room at Impington Village College on Tuesday morning, when the Chairman explained the conditions under which they would be welcome to use the common room and with certain restriction the Institute premises adjoining. During the meeting the aggregate of the ages of these old age pensioners was taken. This amounted to 2,516 years, the average being 74, the youngest 65 and the oldest 85 40 03 15

1940 07 12

Bottisham Players. "Lady Audley's Secret," a play that delighted the hearts of our grandparents, was "Called up" to help the war effort on Saturday afternoon and evening at Bottisham. It was presented at the Village College in aid of the funds of the Cambridgeshire branch of the Red Cross and of the Comforts for the Troops Fund. The cast was drawn from members of the Drama class which is run at Bottisham. 40 07 12

1940 10 18

Village College tour. During a visit to Cambridge on Monday, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. R. S. Hudson) expressed a wish to see one of the county's famous village colleges and social centres. He was taken to Impington—one of the most recent of the colleges—where he was shown some of the many aspects of community work, not only of children, but also for adults. 40 10 18

1941 02 21

Impington Village College dance band – 41 02 21a

1941 07 04 Open Day. Friday last was Open Day at Sawston Village College. The main attraction was the crowning of the May Queen (Nina Cromack, of Shelford) by Mrs. Robert Ellis, of Cottenham. Folk dancing was performed by the girls and physical training exercises

by second year boys. The afternoon's programme included exhibitions of needle work, woodwork, metalwork and art. Evacuees took part in all the activities.

1942 06 12

New Cambridge Peer. Cambridge occupies a singularly prominent place in the King's Birthday Honours. The C.B.E. (Civil Division) is bestowed on Mr. Henry Morris, the County Education Secretary. Mr. Morris is well-known for his pioneer work in the establishment of Village Colleges. 42 06 12

1944 01 07

Well done, schools. In connection with the National Savings Association the Linton Schools head the list in the half-yearly returns of the South Cambridgeshire area. Having topped the list before, the junior schools, on this occasion, with £775 13s. 6d. to their credit raised considerably more than double the amount of any other village. The Linton Village College, in spite of the fact that a number of the students save in their home villages, stepped up their amount to £481 16s., the second highest in the area. The grand total was £1,257 9s. 6d.

1944 03 03

Village College in London Show. "Revealing Britain," an exhibition of British Council photographs, now on view at the Kodak Galleries, 84 Regent Street, London, W.I, shows for the first time a selection of the photographs which the British Council is sending abroad with its Press articles, etc; (says Watchman). One feature of interest to us in Cambridgeshire is a series recently taken of Impington Village College, showing the activities both during the daytime and during the evenings, when it is used for adult education and as a social centre. Copies of two of these pictures reached me yesterday. One is a spectacular "shot" of an open-air physical training class and the other an informal glimpse of a meeting of the College Horticultural Society

1944 03 17

Death of Mr. H. G. Spicer. Many in Cambridgeshire and beyond will learn with regret of the death on Saturday last of Mr. Henry George Spicer, J.P., of 20 Old Queen Street, Westminster, and of Homewood, Sawston. He was 68. A former High Sheriff, Mr. Spicer was well-known in Cambridge as a magistrate, and on the retirement of Judge Farrant, became chairman of the Cambridge Division. He was known in Sawston as chairman of Edward Towgood and Sons, Ltd., the old-established paper mills, which he bought for his company in 1918, and which he re-organised and modernised extensively. He also bought the Towgood estate and other land in Sawston and Whittlesford, in order to develop a flourishing group of factories for companies of which he was chairman. For his employees and others in neighbouring villages, Mr. Spicer was particularly thoughtful, and for these he laid out a sports ground, erected a theatre and cinema and a reading room and library. He also supported many other local improvements and charities. He was a generous benefactor to Sawston Village College, which, when it was built, was the first of its kind in the country.

1947 04 14

The question of a site for a village college at Swavesey was referred back to the General Purposes sub-committee (of the County Council). Subject to the consent of the Ministry 25 to 30 acres of the Manor Farm, Swavesey will be purchased as a site (the Manor House and farm buildings to be excluded from the sale). Coun. Johnson pointed out that the land did flood occasionally, at the same time he did not think they would find a better site.

1948 05 21

Four hundred teachers from Cambridgeshire are gathered at Impington Village College on a course which is believed to be the first of its kind in this country for teaching in rural areas. In his speech at the opening session Henry Morris, Chief Education Officer, said: "In this

technological, scientific world we are over-organised and suffering from an excess of administration"

1949 02 28

For the first time since Impington Village College was opened in 1929, a Gilbert and Sullivan opera was performed there. A packed "house" received enthusiastically the Huntingdon Music Makers Club production of "Ruddigore". The orchestra, conducted by Ethel M. Charles, was well up to the general standard. Arthur Tattersall was the producer

**1950**

1950 11 18

In two years, working mostly during the summer months, the score or so members of the Histon and Impington Amateur Dramatic Society have built themselves a most attractive little theatre out of a former American army hut in the grounds of Impington village college. In 1948 the hut was bought as a scenery store. It was then thought it would make a good rehearsal room and from that came the idea of transforming it into a theatre.

1951 10 10

Bottisham Small-Bore Rifle Club held its outdoor shoot on the new outdoor range at Swaffham Bulbeck. A great deal of work was entailed in the preparation of the site and gratitude was expressed to Mr Stevens for the use of his land for the range, and to the police and military authorities for their help and prompt issuing of the necessary permits. The warden of Bottisham Village College has given every encouragement to the patriotic recreation of small-bore rifle shooting.

1952 10 02

Cambridgeshire Education Committee has approved a proposal to provide Grammar School education at two village colleges – Sawston and Impington. If agreed the work of building grammar school wings may begin next April. At the end of the five-year scheme there will be 300 grammar school places. They had been looking forward to the establishment of a country grammar school with a useful house that could have been adapted. Melbourn Bury, home of a former Chairman of the Education Committee, had not received Ministry approval

1953 10 21

While Bassingbourn Village College was being built last winter, 2,250 bricks used in the foundations disintegrated, accompanied by another 2,000 stand in stacks. They were common wire-cut bricks from a firm in the Midlands and seemed not to have been properly baked. They looked fit to be used and had been submitted to the County Architect. The brick-makers said they would not have supplied such bricks for foundations, but the architect had specified them. The site was open and bricks were affected by frost. Other bricks had been supplied by the National Coal Board.

1954 09 23

Bassingbourn Village College has just been completed and for generations to come young and old will have every opportunity to meet for study, self-expression, practical work or simple relaxation in a building which is delightful in itself and in its surroundings. Its Hall is designed for high-quality acoustics and will be the cinema, theatre, dance and concert hall of the village. There is a splendid gymnasium, a workshop, and a domestic science laboratory complete with a model flat. Courses include farm machinery, advanced pig keeping and gardening on chalk. Miss Julia Lang, of 'Listen with Mother' on the radio, will speak on 'Telling Stories to Children'. The school is already in operation and some 315 children from 14 villages have settled in.

1954 11 02

The ultra-modern Bassingbourn Village College which will be the focal point of cultural and social life for 11 Cambridgeshire villages was officially opened by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr R.A. Butler. It is the first village college to be opened since the war; seven more are planned and sites already acquired at Swavesey and Soham. It would help to stop the drift away from agricultural to industrial areas which might seriously upset the economic balance of the country. A crowd of villagers gathered to watch the arrivals and a detachment of police were on duty to deal with about 250 cars which choked the entrance to the school and overflowed on to the approach road.

1954 11 06

Impington Village College has been open for 15 years; there are now 460 pupils with new buildings including a fine new music room and engineering workshop. A new block of classrooms was being added and there was to be a dining room and kitchen. Soon it would possess the finest buildings of any school in the English countryside. Beautiful buildings were a necessity Henry Morris, the Chief Education Officer, told their Speech Day. Leisure had become one of the great problems of our lives. Passive amusements such as television and football pools were not a good thing. He hoped boys and girls would come back to the college in the evening and do things with their own hands.

1954 12 23

Saying farewell to Mr Henry Morris who is retiring from the post of Chief Education Officer after 34 years the County Council presented him with a portable typewriter and a filing cabinet. He had seen that modern transport which would otherwise transform the countryside into a widespread suburb and the rural hinterland into a cultural void, could be harnessed to create a rural region for the provision of educational and social amenities. He created the Village College as a rural community centre providing facilities for the countryman as good as those offered in towns. He had reinvigorated the school curriculum, improved the quality of teaching and established school gardens at Bottisham and Bassingbourn.

1956 04 16

Is the old-style village hall dying? Many say the coming of Village Colleges is sounding their death-knell and television has reduced attendances. But you watch tv in the dark and people think the village college rather snobbish and are afraid to go there. If the youth are moving to the big towns for their entertainment this did not matter, for the really important people in the village are the young married who cannot get away so easily and they need a cheerful place to go to. 56 04 16

1958 10 17

Soham Village College, the sixth of its kind in Cambridgeshire, was official opened. The idea of a building which is a school in the day and a centre of activities in the evening and weekend was developed by Henry Morris, former Chief Education Officer and has helped to shape education throughout the country. The ultra modern buildings serve a population drawn from eight parishes. The day school provides instruction for 460 children aged 11-15 who are taught by 19 specialist teachers. Further educational studies commence this month. 58 10 17 & b

1958 11 16

The new Swavesey Village College is the seventh to be completed. During the day it is used as a secondary modern school for 330 children and in the evening is attended by 900 people as a further education centre. The college possesses a gymnasium and special rooms for English, geography and music together with a science laboratory, a wood and metal workshop, rooms for cookery, needlework and other household craft. The assembly hall seats 300 people and has a well-equipped stage. 58 11 16

1959 03 28



A new Village College may be provided at Shelford to take children from Stapleford, Harston and Hauxton, providing a compact area with economic transport arrangements. It would avoid the expansion of Sawston and Melbourn village colleges when the school leaving age is raised to 16. But it is not included in the Development Plan and it is not thought likely there would be any considerable increase in population 59 03 28

1959 04 22

The 'Miss Cambridge 1959' contest promoted by Billy Pearce attracted ten entrants. Winner was Pauline Badcock from Cottenham, who is a punch card operator; second was Norma Bullen of Waterbeach, a bank clerk and third Frances May of Cambridge, an insurance company clerk. All three will go into the final to select 'Miss Cambridgeshire 1959' at Linton Village College. 59 04 22c

1959 12 12

Cambridgeshire would get the place in the history of further education that it deserves said the Minister of Education when he opened the new Melbourn Village College. It is a community centre, housing a secondary school for 320 pupils in daytime and providing cultural, vocational and social opportunities in the evenings and weekends with 700 attending evening classes. It is the eighth village college to be built; all have a great reputation among the supporters of adult education. 59 12 12 & a & b

***1960s The Cambridgeshire Collection has newspaper cuttings files from this date***

***1960***

1960 09 16

Lolworth School was built in 1887 and belonged to the county council since 1910 but with the erection of Swavesey Village College it had become redundant. T.B. Robinson, a farmer of Lolworth Grange, bought it for use as a village hall. He said it was a marvellous community. When he first came in 1947 there were only 24 dwelling houses, since then 14 more have been added. There was no through traffic and the only thing it had lacked was somewhere people could gather together. 60 09 16

1960 09 16

This week some 61 youth clubs will open their doors to admit close on 3,000 teenagers. After a short summer break they will become the centre of activities from jazz to judo, coffee drinking to canoe building. Whether in a small village hall or a new village college the records go on for dancing, out come the table-tennis bats and badminton rackets. In fact anything to keep youth happy, anything useful, anything which stimulates thought or encourages interest 60 09 16a

1960 11 07

Comberton Village College was officially opened by Henry Morris who had retired as Chief Education Officer in 1954. The buildings, particularly the hall, workshops and other practical rooms have been equipped so they may be used by young people and adults in the evenings and at weekends. It provides facilities for the countryman as good as those offered in towns and cities and they are packed each evening. The college library, in addition to serving the school, is also a branch of the county library. 60 11 07

1960 11 11

Bassingbourn Village College have inaugurated agricultural classes for young men between the ages of 15 and 18 years. The two-year course provides education for farm workers one day a week and covers stockmanship, crop husbandry farm implements and tractors using equipment provided by local farmers. Mr C.F. Standen, a smallholder, says 'You have got to encourage boys to go on the land nowadays. Farming is becoming easier but you have still got

to have the men. The best implement is the sunshine: it makes everything so much easier to work” 60 11 11

1961 02 22

Sawston Village College has new unique sports hall - 61 02 22c

1961 12 12

Henry Morris, the creator of village colleges, was ‘the most remarkable and creative mind in English education during his generation’. He had the vision to commission Gropius and Fry to design Impington Village College and under his direction Cambridgeshire achieved distinction in raising the national standard of design in schools. Morris attempted to extend his ideas to other zones, but was opposed by vested interests. Instead he was commissioned by President Roosevelt to develop rural community centres in the USA. 61 12 12b & 13a

1962 03 21

Rampton County School will probably close when the headmistress, Mrs J. Haird, retires at the end of the summer term. The pupils would be transferred to Cottenham where a Village College will open shortly taking children over 11 years of age from surrounding villages. This will leave the Cottenham County School available for primary education. There would be no real opposition but if there was a public inquiry could be held, councillors were told. 62 03 21

1963 05 29

A site has been identified for the proposed new Shelford Village College 63 05 29  
Melbourn Village College pupils have returned from a five-week tour of Austrian refugee camps where they gave performances of songs and sketches. 63 09 10

1963 11 07

Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother said the new Cottenham Village College was opportune; in the years ahead there will be people going out to work at the age of 15 or 16 who in their more mature years would want to develop their interests. With increased leisure demand would increase and she was confident Cambridgeshire would play its part in new developments. She spoke to some children, then planted a copper beech tree 63 11 07a

1963 11 26

Bassingbourn’s new County Primary School, looking like a miniature village college, was officially opened. It was built to replace the school in High Street built in 1877 which had been inadequate especially when families had come to live at the RAF station. At one time there had been 360 children on the roll. Cambridgeshire had provided 13 new primary schools in rural areas as well as enlarging 29 others, laying the foundation for education, Ald F.H. Jeeps said. 63 11 26a

1963 12 06

Gamlingay Full Range school gives pupils aged 5-15 a unique education; they discuss newspaper coverage of current affairs and study thatching and car maintenance having built a garage for the school minibus. There is a large garden growing produce for school meals with the remainder being sold. After the four o’clock bell come clubs like match-box-top collecting, horse management and canoe-building. Retiring Headmaster J.T.C. Robinson MBE has been ahead of contemporary education. But soon the senior pupils will be transferred to the newly-planned Village College 63 12 06g

1964 09 05

Linton village college construction photo – 64 09 05b

1965 01 13

Village College for Gt Shelford plans inquiry – 65 01 13a

1965 02 08

Burwell Secondary Modern School was the first to introduce adult evening classes in 1923 but it was not felt right to turn it into a village college until other areas of Cambridgeshire had secondary education. Now it will be the last to enter village college ranks and money has been allocated for new buildings and soon the old buildings will be empty for the first time since its foundation in 1846. The principle has mixed views believing the present school has all necessary educational accoutrements and provides children will a good education 65 02 08a

1965 02 18

Bassingbourn Youth Club has a comfortable club room known as 'the dugout' situated under the stage of the Village College hall. Previously used as a furniture store it has been cleaned and decorated with colourful murals drawn and painted by some of the girls. The boys have built a coffee bar and adapted some of the old school furniture into coffee tables. Chairs and cupboards have been bought and dart boards and a variety of games imported. The hall is used for more energetic pastimes such as table tennis and badminton and the centre has acquired a full-sized billiards table which Rudyard Kipling originally bequeathed to Orwell village 65 02 18b

1965 03 04

The need for youth clubs in a rural area is perhaps even more acute than that in larger towns where there are at least coffee bars, cinemas and dance halls. The Village College has helped provide organised activities but something else is needed to prevent the breakdown of village life and individual youth clubs should be established, Jim Reed, adult tutor of Linton VC says. Clubs attract a high proportion of the youthful population who participate in many activities for which the village hall or school is suitable - billiards, table tennis, darts or dancing. One evening a week club members throughout the area get together at Linton for organised activities such as five-a-side football, badminton or table-tennis coaching. Special dressmaking and shorthand and typing classes are arranged. Until recently young people shied away from anything that was the least bit formal or organised. Now they are beginning to want something outside their clubs and enjoy coming to the VC and meeting members from other clubs. Increased mobility has encouraged young people to go onto the towns at weekends, particularly if Friday is pay day. During the week they stay in home area. Some clubs have done a lot of work for elderly people and this may increase. Village clubs have become an integral part of village life and when youngsters see they are well established they settle down to do something. If more people help rather than criticising a lot more could be done. Young are maturing earlier and marrying earlier; need senior clubs catering for those of courting age and up to 25. Brinkley is one of best examples, formed six years ago; the only other venture is a boys club which concentrates on physical training. The club meets Tuesdays and Thursdays in the village hall and is run by a committee of youngsters. Is a friendly active organisation with more than 50 members from the tiny village and area. Activities include table tennis, darts, board games and racing small electric cars around a track. In the kitchen the girls make coffee and eggs on toast for their friends. Whole atmosphere of friendship and enjoyment. We don't want anything more, just the opportunity to get together, talk and play games, they say. Cricket and football teams have been formed. More than £50 given to charity, elderly people given food parcels and entertained to day outings and other tasks involving practical help have been undertaken. At Horseheath a derelict hall was acquired by youngsters and now serves as home of a very cheerful little club. Membership only 20-30, but this is 90% of the eligible population. It is an isolated village where the club gives something never before had. When members tire of playing table tennis or darts they gather round and chat informally about current affairs or listen to instruction on first aid. When first opened many villagers contributed 2s 6d towards cost of redecorating the hall and more spent on laying a proper concrete path outside. With freedom of its own hall they will redecorate by new members who take pride and interest. Atmosphere at both is friendly- 65 03 04c, d

## 1970

1976 05 10

Bottisham Village College's new £23,000 swimming pool was "christened" with a practical joke. To many of those who sat or stood in sweltering sunshine the fate of the college's former head, Mr Charles Brereton, may have seemed more than enviable. In the first breach of pool regulation rules he was pushed into the cool blue of the water. During his time at the college he presided over the raising of over £18,000 in two years.

1976 05 26

Sixteen-year-old Jayne's new hair-do in aid of charity landed her in trouble at school. And it was not the style that caused a fuss, it was the colour. For her dark brown hair had been dyed ... bright green. She is a pupil at Melbourn Village College and had her hairstyle altered at a charity fashion show at the YMCA. "As soon as I walked into college I was told off and told not to go back until I had had the dye taken out", she said. At Reed's Hairdressing Salon they said: "I find it difficult to believe that in 1976 a girl could be taken home from school for this reason". Other girls had had their hair coloured peacock blue, violet burgundy, sky blue and brilliant blue at the nape of the neck.

1978 05 06

A plan to sell off part of the playing fields at Bassingbourn Village College is being considered by Cambridgeshire County Council as part of its programme to raise cash. Development land has been fetching up to £40,000 an acre and all their land is being looked at to find any that can be sold with planning permission. But the scheme is likely to run into heavy opposition from villagers. The site is also used by the primary school and by young footballers who cannot use the recreation ground because of a restrictive covenant banning Sunday games. A similar scheme to sell land at Bottisham Village College is also being opposed

1978 08 03

Ray Malmstrom, has just retired after teaching at Impington Village College for 32 years. He started as an assistant teacher with responsibility for the arts and within a fortnight had started a model aeroplane club, which is still going strong. He taught art and must have coached about 4,000 pupils, many of whom have gone on to art schools and training colleges and become teachers or have set up on their own as graphic designers

1979 12 05

The Duke of Edinburgh was cheered by more than 1,000 pupils when visited Sawston Village College to mark its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. But there to meet him were also some of the very first pupils of Britain's first village college which opened on 30<sup>th</sup> October 1930. They were Ron Brown who was number three on the register and is now a printing supervisor, Douglas Page now Marshall's chief pilot and Mrs Josephine Ling who has never really left and is now the school secretary. What started as a school with just 200 pupils now has 1,300 and is also attended by around 2,000 adults a week for evening classes, clubs and societies

## 1980

1981 03 31

Comberton Village College pupils have launched themselves as a school band. They tried out their talents on a captive audience when as The Delves they gave a charity performance. Fellow pupils, paying 10p a time, packed out the school's new music block for the lunchtime concert on behalf of the Jo Homan Appeal which provides amenities for destitute boys in India. The group's trumpeter, Ian Brock, said: "We're happy to do charity work because we just love playing; but obviously we'd like other arrangements 81 03 31

1981 10 20

The news that Littleport could lose its village college dropped like a bombshell on pupils, parents, teachers and school governors alike. Older pupils would transfer to Ely and the building turned into a primary school. But the loss of the 549-pupil college would turn Littleport into a 'ghost town' and protest petitions are being circulated. 81 10 20a

1981 10 21

Littleport primary school is bursting at the seams. Eleven of its 14 classrooms are temporary huts dotted around its tiny site and pupils have to run the gauntlet of fen weather to get to their toilets, to lunch and to lessons. Now the County Council is considering shutting the village college and using the redundant buildings for a new primary school. But the Head says it would not be suitable. 81 10 21

1981 11 04

Shock new proposals to change the face of education in the Ely area have emerged in a secret report. It suggests closure of five more schools at Little Ouse, Stuntney, Prickwillow, Black Horse Drove and St Audrey's, Ely together with Bedford House further education centre. At Littleport the Village College buildings would become a new county primary school. 81 11 04

1984 03 31

Education Secretary, Sir Keith Joseph, chatted with pupils in their classrooms when he visited Comberton Village College on hush-hush trip. No advance publicity had been given to avoid demonstrators turning up. Sir Keith started his visit by having mince and vegetables for lunch. He sat next to 12-year-old Hartley Kemp, who is chairman of the school's council and chatted about homework. 84 03 31 p8

1984 06 26

Horningsea village sign was unveiled by Radio Cambridgeshire's Ian Masters. It was designed and painted by local resident, Peter Halford and made by a class of boys from Bottisham Village College. A time capsule containing information and items from the village has been built into it 84 06 26 p13

1984 09 28

Girls of Impington Village College are demure school misses by day and dazzling disco princesses by night. The 10 girls make up two teams, Mekanism and Africano, and are heading for Hammersmith Palais for the British National Association of Youth Club's Junior Team Disco championships. They are tutored by physical education and dance teacher Mrs Stephanie Franklin and spend five hours a week perfecting their hip-swivelling, high-kicking routines. 84 09 28

1984 09 03

Twenty-eight Cambridgeshire schools use corporal punishment. At Burwell Village College the cane is used by the warden on very rare occasions, at Cottenham only in extreme cases such as continual bullying and Manor School carry out caning in rare and severe cases. Netherhall School says it is rarely and reluctantly resorted to by the headmaster or his deputies and St Bede's school has a similar policy 84 09 03

1984 11 12

Dazzling dancers, Mekanism, from Impington Village College have won the junior championships in the National Association of Youth Clubs disco dance championship. Another pupil, Penny Latin, came second in the disco dance design competition with her flame-patterned circular skirt and bare midriff outfit. The PE teacher, Stephanie Franklin took

the school's senior dance teams, Rhythmic Revolution and Terpsichorean Rage, to the top of the championship in the last two years 84 11 12 p1

1985 08 13

Swavesey villagers are outraged at plans to shut their library and replace it with a van. The library is the centre of the community with a turnover of at least 2,500 books a week; old people's clubs arrange meetings when it is open so that elderly members can call in. Even people from the surrounding villages use it. The protests started when it was discovered that village college governors had decided that the library would have to move out of rented rooms there because of a desperate shortage of classrooms. If the public library were to go the school could have more accommodation at no extra expense. But campaigners say "We won't let this happen. We have got to keep our library in the village". 85 08 13

1985 09 24

Cambridgeshire Secondary Schools need £10 million spent on essential building work to stop children being taught in 'appalling conditions'. Hinchbrook Lower School was particularly bad with leaking roofs and rotting window frames. Many of their 14 mobile classrooms were over 20 years old and totally dilapidated. Work is also needed at Bottisham and Swavesey Village Colleges but the current Government will not allow the work to be carried out in a single year. "The Conservatives have left us with a massive problem" said an Alliance county councillor 85 09 24

1986 02 07

Dozens of Sawston families were evacuated after a 24lb cache of explosives was discovered in a home. Most were put up for the night by other residents but 30 were taken to the Village College where camp beds were brought in and staff dished out tea and coffee. The industrial gelignite, some of it in poor condition, was thought to belong to an explosives expert who established a world record for demolishing 10 chimneys at Whittlesey. It was detonated in an open field by bomb disposal experts 86 02 07

1986 09 25

Ben Gimbert and Jimmy Nightall have long been folk heroes on the railway following the ammunition train explosion at Soham in June 1944. Jimmy was killed and Ben critically injured as they uncoupled a burning truck loaded with bombs, saving the town. Both were awarded the George Cross. Now, 37 years later, relations, railwaymen and people from Soham gathered at March station where British Rail named two Inter-City diesel locomotives after them. The Bishop of Ely blessed the engines and children from Soham Village College sang a hymn composed especially for the occasion. 86 09 25a & 29

1987 02 10

At Comberton Village College classes now start at 8.30am and the lunch-break has been cut to 40 minutes. But when the school day comes to an end at 2.50pm many children opt to stay behind, having enrolled on one of the 16 different activities such as badminton, drama electronics or Frisbee coaching. None of the pupils actually like jumping out of bed earlier in the morning but prefer the new scheme as it gives them time to pursue new hobbies. Some mothers are concerned about their children getting tired but like not having to ferry them to after-school activities elsewhere 87 02 10 & a

1987 02 25

John Brackenbury former naval officer and warden of Impington Village College teacher has been an unlikely politician. But for seven years has thrown himself into the cut and thrust of council work. He was Alliance chairman of the Education Committee during a turbulent time when teachers took strike action. He's represented Histon and Impington since 1981 but has now resigned his seat and is retiring to rural Kent. 87 02 25 & a

1987 03 30

The Education Secretary, Kenneth Baker, has approved the controversial decision to close the Roger Ascham School for the physically handicapped in Cambridge, despite a long-running battle by parents and governors to save it. Pupils will be transferred to special units at the Grove Primary School and Impington Village College as part of the county council policy of integrating handicapped youngsters with able-bodied children. The senior education officer said he was pleased, though upset that the news had been leaked before parents could be told officially. 87 03 30

1987 04 10

Bottisham was the county's third Village College when it opened in May 1937. In those days people came in the evening to cook, mend their farm machinery and listen to religious music rather than sit at home with only a gas lamp and nothing to do. Now they come for swimming, yoga and bingo. The jubilee will be celebrated with an exhibition, book and the planting of 2,000 trees. The current pupils are planning a big social event of their own 87 04 10

1987 05 05

Comberton may expand under controversial new plans. Developers Alfred McAlpine Homes want to build 215 houses and an employment centre on a 40-acre site to meet the growing demand for housing. It would safeguard the Village College and speed the connection of gas. The village is not earmarked for development in the county structure plans and there is no support for the scheme by residents. But with the recent rejection of plans for Clay Farm Trumpington there is pressure for extra housing in nearby settlements 87 05 05

1987 05 08

Bottisham Village College jubilee celebrations include an exhibition portraying the college through the last five decades. It hasn't forgotten its origins as a "countryman's college". In the 1930s when the original school was built, Bottisham was a poor farming district. It was a time when education was depressed and children were collected from neighbouring villages to attend what was only the second village college to be opened. Then it had 211 pupils, today there are 960. 87 05 08c

1988 04 06

Bottisham's impressive swimming, which opened in 1986 after years of intense fund-raising efforts, now has a new extension. It is a fine, heated pool available to public and village college which runs at a profit by exploring every possible avenue of instruction, entertainment and education including groups learning windsurfing, canoeing, snorkelling and water polo. The Brownies, youth clubs and the Asthma Society are other regular users. It is a fine example of what a community activity can achieve when the enthusiasm and scope are there 88 04 06

1989 12 07

Bassingbourn Village College was built the wrong way round in 1954. The original main entrance was blocked up for more office space and a valuable statue is now out of view because it is still at the original entrance. The changing rooms are the furthest walk possible to the playing fields than any other pointing the school, Governor Allan Miller says. But there is the possibility that the college is in the right place, and the village needs moving. 89 12 07a

1989 12 28

Ely has gone from gloom to boom over the past 10 years. The closure of the Sugar Beet Factory at Queen Adelaide with the loss of jobs was the biggest blow. The weekly livestock market closed as did Littleport Village College and a number of schools. But now the city, for so long a sleepy backwater in the fens, is about to witness one of the most dramatic periods of change in its entire history. There will be multi-million pound shopping centre, housing

estates and industrial areas together with a new community of 1,500 houses between Ely and Cambridge. 89 12 28b